



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *Lawrence, MA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Lawrence for a Brownfields Pilot. Lawrence was one of the first planned industrial cities in the country in the mid-1800s. Mills, industrial buildings, underground water raceways, and homes were built in close proximity, and now constitute historic preservation areas. However, Lawrence is now the 23rd poorest city in the nation, with a 15 percent unemployment rate. Seven thousand jobs were lost during the 1980s, even in the midst of the Massachusetts economic boom. This decline primarily affects the large minority population in the district. The City is actively participating in an effort to redevelop contaminated properties through the Lawrence Gateway Project.

### OBJECTIVES

Through this effort, the City plans to promote economic development within the designated brownfields Lawrence Gateway Project area, while enhancing the quality of life for those who work, visit and live within the area. The City is carefully coordinating the implementation of the Pilot with several overlapping City-wide economic development initiatives. Lawrence is also working to build on

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Lawrence, Massachusetts*

**Date of Award:**  
June 1996

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets three priority sites in the North Canal Industrial Corridor, a one and a quarter-mile stretch along the Merrimack River containing former textile mills, landfills, and paper manufacturers.

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existing outreach efforts to encourage involvement with the community's minority groups and other stakeholders.

- Coordinating redevelopment plans and activities among the City, State agencies, and Federal departments.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Pilot has:

- Appointed a Steering Committee which includes the neighborhood association, local businesses, and environmental groups.

The Pilot is:

- Developing preliminary inventories of industrial and commercial properties within the North Canal Industrial Corridor, and identifying potential beneficial land uses including: integrating inventory data into an existing geographic information system (GIS) database; selecting three priority sites for "site focus investigations" that include environmental evaluations and conceptual redevelopment planning; and preparing supplementary investigation plans to outline additional information needs;
- Preparing a user-document that outlines economic incentives and other financing instruments available for brownfields redevelopment projects; and
- Planning to review and expand Lawrence's community advisory committees and increase outreach and community education programs.

## **LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Experience with the Lawrence Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Lawrence has been designated as a Groundworks Trust Community. This partnership between the EPA and the National Park Service is intended to improve the natural, economic and social environment of Lawrence while developing local grassroots conservation organizations with the ability to conserve local rivers, trails and open spaces.

- Planning to adapt the State of Massachusetts' Clean Site Initiative within the City of Lawrence.